

The Vatican and Germany

*Translation of the important statement which appeared in the
Osservatore Romano, the semi-official organ of the
Holy See, on July 16, 1935.*

FOR some time in Germany Catholics have been traversing difficult hours in defence of Catholic dogma and morality and their inalienable rights. Thus has been created a very painful situation, inexplicable, not only because irreconcilable with the public assurances which the Chancellor of the Reich had given when taking possession of that office, that he would respect the Catholic Church and keep the Concordats previously contracted, but also because it is in open contrast with the Concordat concluded on July 20, 1933, which, completing and renewing the preceding agreements, assured to German Catholics "the liberty of profession and the public exercise of the Catholic Religion" (Art. I).

It would seem, then, that the varied and continual molestations of which the ecclesiastical authorities have been the victims, as also the Catholic Associations, schools, works and institutions, have been provoked by unquiet elements little subject to the directive of the Government, and also still more by that extreme tendency which, under the open direction of Herr Rosenberg, makes no mystery of its will to destroy Christianity in Germany in order to establish, by the cult of race, an authentic paganism.

Some think that the Government either overlooks or is too tolerant, but that it cannot connive at or be the instigator of these things; for it would be too painful that within two years' distance it could violate obligations solemnly and freely contracted. But a new fact has occurred which if not rectified must place Catholics in the necessity of looking at things very differently, and to expect that attacks which hitherto have been more or less irregular will henceforth bear the character of official hostility. We refer to the public statements of Dr. Frick, Minister of the Interior, made at Munster, on the seventh of this month, statements of the uttermost gravity. The first concerns the law of sterilization and the attitude of Catholics regarding the application of this law, which they consider irreconcilable with divine law and their consciences. It is unnecessary to reproduce

these statements in full, as they have been fully reported in the press. It is enough to regard the essential point.

"As official representative of the Government of the Reich," said the Minister, "we are not prepared to endure any further sabotage of the Laws of the Reich. Even according to the Concordat, the Catholic Church ought to consider as obligatory for her members the laws which are obligatory upon all in the State." Such a declaration has brought great agitation to souls, especially for the singular reference to the Concordat, as if the Holy See had assumed the obligation to make all the faithful observe all the future laws of the State without distinction, even when contrary to Divine Law and the Christian conscience.

Moreover, similar affirmations of Dr. Frick have caused the greatest surprise not only to Catholics, but also to non-Catholics, so much so that they were inclined to attribute them to inaccurate reproduction on the part of the press. But to remove all doubt the *Deutsches Nachrichten-Buero* of July 10th publishes a communication, which has appeared in German newspapers, stating: "The Minister of the Interior of the Reich and Prussia makes known that the law for the defence of a generation hereditarily enfeebled is valid for all, and according to the norm of the dispositions of the Concordat, should be respected by every Catholic."

There is no doubt, according to the Minister, that the law of sterilization ought to be observed by every German Catholic, also by reason of the Concordat. By force of the Concordat, the Catholic Church has the obligation of considering as obligatory for Catholics a law contrary to her own teaching, and condemned by the Divine Law. What is to be said of this theory?

Apart from the juridical and moral absurdity of pretending that the Catholic Church should be the instrument of the State in regard to a law which she cannot do other than condemn, is it true, as the Minister asserts, that, according to the Concordat with the Reich, the Church should consider obligatory on the faithful any law, even if against the Divine Law? Or is not the truth the exact contrary of this?

One of the fundamental principles of the Concordat, which should naturally be in accord with the legislation of the State, is that of Art. I already cited, which guarantees to Catholics, without any limitation, "freedom of profession

and the public exercise of the Catholic Religion." Consequently, if the organs of the State wish to prevent the ecclesiastical authorities, priests and simple lay folk from manifesting their conviction regarding this so-called law of sterilization, or to act according to their conscience, they are in contradiction to the dispositions of the Concordat.

The final Protocol of the Concordat referring to Art. 32, sec. 2, is still more explicit. It expressly declares that it is not intended to impose upon priests and religious "limitations of any kind in publicly teaching and explaining, as is their duty, the doctrines and maxims of the Church, not only dogmatic, but moral." It recognizes, then, that priests have to teach and explain publicly the moral maxims of the Church, and guarantees them full liberty in so doing.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the text of the discourse of the Minister of the Interior reported in the Press cannot be reconciled with the prescriptions of the Concordat. Perhaps the Minister refers to Cap. 2 of Art. I, where it is stated that the Church freely regulates and administers its affairs within "the ambit of the general laws in operation." But it is obvious that this is subordinate to the guarantees of liberty for the Catholic faith and the public profession of the Catholic religion recognized without any restriction by Art. I, and that this section cannot be in opposition to the explicitly recognized right of the Church, referred to in the final Protocol, "to teach and explain publicly the doctrine and maxims of the Church, not only dogmatic, but moral."

In the same discourse at Munster Dr. Frick referred to Catholic organizations. If the words attributed by the press to the Minister are correct, these statements also are irreconcilable with the Concordat. The Minister said: "We have still organizations in the public life of Germany which cause confessional discord among the people. We Nationalists demand a complete 'disconfessionalization' of the whole public life. I am bound to say the professional Catholic associations, like the 'Gesellenvereine,' and confessional organizations of youth, are not adapted for our times." Very well. Art. 31 of the Concordat with the Reich guarantees to the Catholic Church that such organizations: "shall be protected in their institutions and activities." The Minister should be aware that the State is bound to the observance of the obligations it has contracted.

The Minister has also spoken against the Catholic daily press: "There is also another significant existence, that of the daily Catholic press. We wish to have neither a Catholic nor a Protestant daily press, but one solely German." This declaration, prescinding any other consideration, is in opposition to the principal guarantee of the Concordat, that of the religious liberty of Catholics, and therefore with the right of German Catholics, for the custody and diffusion of their faith—in conscious harmony with the fulfilment of their civic duties—to use all the means of modern culture, which have become the unquestioned instruments of every spiritual activity. That the care of confessional values cannot in any way signify injury or constitute a menace to the nation is abundantly clear. We are sadly surprised to see supported officially, even in an attenuated, offensive and unjustifiable form, the accusation that confessions destroy national unity, an accusation which has become common to the itinerant orators of Neo-Paganism. It is supremely sad to see that, while full liberty is given to the press for the propagation of theories which are the negation of Christianity, and to attack the Catholic Church, they strive to suppress or condemn to inaction the Catholic press, which amidst a thousand difficulties tries to raise its voice in defence of truth against the attacks of adversaries.

Finally, as a further confirmation of what we have said, it is well to reproduce the official communication and Concordat between the two contracting parties on the occasion of the exchange of ratifications on September 10, 1933, which constitute a formal pledge on the part of the German Government. "Before the exchange of Ratifications the Holy See has sent the Government of the Reich an exposition, verbal and written, on a series of points concerning the interpretation of the Concordat and applications which have been made. They regard, above all, the existence, activity, and protection of Catholic organizations, and the liberty of German Catholics to express and explain publicly, and also in the press Catholic doctrine and the maxims of Catholic morality. The Government of the Reich has declared to the Holy See that it is prompt to treat at the earliest moment of the matters referred to, so as to reach a reciprocal agreement corresponding to the letter and the spirit of the Concordat." This is so clear that it needs no comment.

Anti-Christian Germany

An article published over the pseudonym of Peregrinus in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record for August, 1935.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN movements in Germany are of two chief kinds: (1) the so-called German Faith Movement and (2) the German People's Church Movement.

The German Faith Movement (*Deutsche Glaubensbewegung*) is definitely pagan in tendency. It rejects the possibility of any kind of union between Germanism (*Germanentum*) and Christianity, and aims frankly at abolishing all Christian belief and worship, and substituting for Christianity some reconstructed form of ancient Germanic, or Nordic, pagan belief and ritual. The German Faith Movement is by no means new. Some of the associations, or clubs, that foster it were founded before the European War, and others were established during the War. The great military successes of Germany in the early period of the War tended to call into being an intense spirit of national pride, and that spirit was used by existing anti-Christian organizations to further their aims. Defeat in the World War, the setting up of the Republic, and the myriad new problems that arose in post-war Germany left at first little scope for the growth of paganism as a rival to Christianity.

The triumph of the Nazi movement, however, has brought back to the Germans something of the exultation and self-confidence which they felt in the early days of the War. With that exultation has come a tendency to magnify the greatness of Germany, and to ascribe to Germanic or Nordic blood a mysterious and almost divine importance. The German Faith Movement will have nothing to do with anything that is not "Nordic": no religious influences coming from the East, or from Africa, or the southern countries of Europe can be made acceptable to the "Nordic man." To the German the highest things, the things worth dying for, are the German race, the German soul, and the soil of Germany.

Pagan rites have been revived or invented to take the place of baptism, confirmation, and marriage. Old centers of Germanic tradition and superstition are being transformed

into places of pilgrimage, and the calendar has been heathenized. The neo-pagans now count their adherents by hundreds of thousands, and they are carrying on an enthusiastically vigorous propaganda for their movement. They have numerous periodicals and some newspapers at their disposal, and all their methods of propaganda are dramatic and sensational. In connection with the German Faith Movement one hears constantly the names of Hauer, Bergmann, Ludendorff, Count Reventlow, and others.

The German Faith Movement is permitted to carry out its various activities in a curiously unrestricted manner. Though Hitler and Goebbels, and probably also Goering—the ruling Triumvirate—were all, at one time, Catholics, and still profess to support positive Christianity, they seem to treat the German Faith Movement with peculiar indulgence. The heathenizing movement harmonizes well with that side of National Socialism which practically deifies Germany, and the *Hakenkreuz* (swastika) emblem of the Nazis—which in the confused thought of the multitude is regarded as a remnant of very ancient heathen symbolism—is taken as a sort of natural connecting-link between neo-paganism and devotion to the Nazi State.

(2) The other less radical movement away from Christianity, which is called the *Deutschkirchliche Richtung*, attempts a reconciliation between "Germanism" and Christianity by sacrificing nearly everything that genuine Christians would regard as essential to Christianity. In effect it is an extreme form of skeptical Liberalism in which the liberal rejection of dogma, sacrament, and priesthood is combined with a pugnacious nationalism that tends to substitute Germany for God. This movement does not, however, abjure traditional Church services, nor does it submit to be called heathen. Hence it is distinguished from the more or less frankly pagan groups by the designation *Deutschkirchliche Richtung*—the movement towards a German People's Church. It involves, however, so complete a transformation of Christianity—whether Catholic or Protestant—that one cannot well see why it should trouble to retain associations with the idea of "Church." Its notion of Christ is quite unhistorical, and it would certainly not admit that Christ is the only "Lord."

It would be a grave misunderstanding to regard these

anti-Christian movements as merely fantastic. The German Bishops evidently take them very seriously, and if we are to judge by the enormous and apparently enthusiastic meetings of these neo-pagans (for example, the huge meeting in the Berlin *Sportpalast* addressed by Hauer on April 26th), the Bishops have good reason for their view. The two movements sketched in broad outline above are being promoted, as has been already said, by a large number of clubs or societies. Some of these are outspokenly pagan (for instance, the *Wodan-Gesellschaft*, Ludendorff's *Tannenbergbund*, the *Balderbund*, the *Jungheidnischer Ring*, etc.); others are apparently (but only apparently) Christian. The activities of those societies are not limited to the large towns: they have their workers in the tiniest villages and among the agricultural population everywhere. They seek to accommodate themselves everywhere to the point of view of those who have any grievances against the Churches or particular ecclesiastics, and at all times and everywhere they speak in the name of the most advanced patriotism.

Among the most active of the paganizing groups is that which seeks its guidance in Rosenberg's *Mythos* (*Der Mythos des 20ten Jahrhunderts*). Rosenberg insists that he himself is not a "pagan," but he will have little or nothing to do with Christianity. It is a religion devised by Syrians, Africans, Etruscans, and other equally "inferior" peoples, and is quite below the standard of the "Nordic man." As Rosenberg's book is the most widely circulated and most widely read book on the new "German Faith" or the "New Church of the German People" (Rosenberg in a sense combines the two movements above described), some of its salient teachings may profitably be summarized here.

Rosenberg asserts that the future of Germanic religion lies with what he calls "positive" Christianity. "Negative" Christianity is traditional Catholic Christianity, which must be rejected because of its Mediterranean origins, and because it teaches dogma and self-repression rather than freedom and self-expression. Positive Christianity, on the other hand, is a rousing challenge to the powers that are concentrated in the Nordic blood.

This positive Christianity excludes the idea of a personal God, and therefore rejects supernatural revelation. The only thing that is truly divine is the Nordic race-soul

(which apparently means Nordic race-blood). In the scale of values the highest of all things is the character of the Nordic man, and the religion that helps to bring out the finest point of that character must be the "true" religion. The most valued thing in the Nordic character is its sense of honor, and therefore the highest service that religion can perform is the fostering and upholding of the Nordic sense of honor. The chief function of religion then must be to serve the national honor, and for the individual, service of that honor is its own reward, and must take the place of the hope of immortality.

Instead then of a Protestant and a Catholic Church there must be a Church of the German People. That Church will have no dogmas or Sacraments; its language must be German; it will subordinate fraternal charity to national honor. In the new Church there can be no place for the Jewish Old Testament. The New Testament will still be used in the Church of the German People—but a New Testament purged of everything that is "distorted" and incredible. The Gospel portrait of Christ must be "rectified," and everything that is meek and gentle therein, every hint of suffering and weakness must be removed. The Christ of the People's Church cannot be the crucified Lamb of God—but the mighty Preacher and the indignant Temple-Purifier. The crucifix must not appear in the new Church, and in the "new" New Testament there will be no trace of Old Testament Prophecies or of Petrine texts.

This conception of the "Church of the German People" is, obviously, in many respects, a logical outcome of the radical liberalism of the end of the nineteenth century. It seems hardly suitable to designate the new religion a "Church," and at times Rosenberg states plainly that to be a vigorous member of the German nation is more important than to belong to a "German Church." Indeed ultimately the "Church of the German People" is simply the totality of those who believe in the supremacy of the Nordic spirit, and are ready to defend its domination even at the cost of personal sacrifice.

The chief danger arising for Catholicism out of the Rosenberg propaganda and the activity of the neo-pagans generally must be looked for in the effect of the anti-Christian movement on the young folk—the school children and the boys

and girls under twenty. It must not be forgotten that behind all the neo-pagan propaganda is the patriotic appeal. All that divides the people of Germany must be put aside, and because the Christian Churches seem to be sources of division, they must be either abandoned or put utterly in the background. Hence the appeal for a united and powerful Germany inevitably includes a proposal for the gradual abandonment of Christian creeds and Churches. The Nazi movement aims above all else at making the idea of a great and united Germany the inspiration of all activity, private and public, in the Third Reich. National Socialism, its leaders say, is not a political revolution so much as a new conception of reality and life—a new *Weltanschauung*, almost, therefore, a new religion, and as such it is put before the youth of the country unceasingly.

Influence on the children and youth is exercised chiefly through the great Nazi organizations known as "Hitler Youth," "German Girls' League," and the "Labor Front." None of these is confessional, and until recently young people might belong to a Catholic or Protestant organization as well as to one of the Nazi leagues. It will be clear, however, from what has been said that simultaneous membership in a Christian organization and of a Nazi association could not be regarded favorably by the Nazi leaders, and the leader of the "Hitler Youth," Baldur von Schirach, and the director of the "Labor Front," Herr Ley, have frequently referred to the inner contradiction implied in such double membership.

In several localities double membership was formally prohibited by the district leaders, and quite recently an official order has been issued prohibiting all members of the Hitler Youth groups from wearing on any occasion the uniforms or other insignia of Christian clubs or leagues. This means really an attempt to suppress all such Christian organization, for a German club cannot hope to subsist without its insignia. It means also that membership of a Hitler association becomes practically obligatory for all young Christians, for there is no hope now-a-days of a future in Germany, whether in the professions or commerce, or even in the labor world, for young people who have not passed through the various stages of Nazi education in the Nazi youth-groups.

When, then, it is remembered, on the one hand, that the leader of "Hitler Youth" is a pugnacious propagandist of the Nazi *Weltanschauung*, and, on the other, that Rosenberg's "Mythos" is the Bible of the youth movement, and that it is constantly expounded to the German school children, and must be kept in all libraries and meeting-places of the "Hitler Youth," when it is remembered, further, that, as above explained, the Nazi *Weltanschauung* involves perfervid nationalism, and that its teaching encourages "self-expression" rather than self-restraint, it is easy enough to realize the tremendous dangers for Catholicism that lie in the pagan and quasi-pagan atmosphere which envelops practically all the Catholic school children of Germany.

Here, rather than in the penalizing of old followers of the Centrum (which is almost universal), and in the State's efforts to stifle so-called "political" activities in Catholicism, lies the great threat to the Catholic Church in Germany. The German Bishops are fully alive to this danger, and have emphasized it, as far as has been possible within the strict limits permitted by jealous Nazi control. As time goes on and the Nazi policy becomes more and more anti-Christian and effective, the Catholic authorities in Germany will be faced with difficulties more subtle and satanic than those of the *Kulturmampf* period, for many of those difficulties will come from their own Nazi-trained flocks.

It is true that both "Baldr von Schirach" and Ley have, over and over again, reminded assemblies that membership in the Hitler organizations of Youth and Labor is quite voluntary, and that no one is penalized for failure to seek that membership; but they have always significantly added that those who do not join the Hitler groups show thereby that "they refuse to coöperate in the work of the *Führer*." Moreover, they and their Nazi colleagues never cease to assert that membership of confessional organizations implies the rejection of the idea of the Nazi State. It is an easy inference that those who refuse to coöperate with the *Führer*, and those who reject the Nazi State cannot expect much consideration from a Nazi Government!

Christianity and the New Paganism

MICHAEL CARDINAL VON DE FAULHABER

ARCHBISHOP OF MUNICH

Address to men and youths at the celebrations in honor of the canonization of St. Conrad of Parzham, at Altötting. Text taken from the Standard (Dublin), for October 26, 1934.

THE Government of the Reich has repeatedly stated in a most authoritative fashion that it stands for Positive Christianity. It has, therefore, rejected the New Paganism and in an agreement with the Head of the Catholic Church has guaranteed to Catholics the right to practise their religion and to propagate their faith. But a group of Free-thinkers, new and old, who proudly declare themselves pagans, under the pretext of the "cult of the race" have denied the God of Christianity. They have "devised vain things against the Lord and against His Christ" (Psalm ii, 1). They have declared war on Christianity, especially on the Catholic religion, declaring it incompatible with the German character.

Hence, I wish to explain to you Catholic people what a treasure and what a blessing we possess in the Christian religion, and what a miserable substitute the new paganism would be.

ST. PAUL'S THREE QUESTIONS

The Apostle St. Paul put to the Corinthians three questions: "What fellowship hath light with darkness?" In the Gospel parable the light signifies Christianity, darkness, paganism. "Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not" (John, xii, 35). The second question is: "What concord hath Christ with Belial," the pagan idol? The Apostle warns the faithful not to attempt to harmonize the clear limpid voice of Christianity with the discordant notes of paganism. In the third place he asks: "What part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?" In civil life and in public undertakings they can, no doubt, work peacefully together, but there can be no religious unity between the Christian faith and pagan unbelief. Hence it is

forbidden to Catholics to frequent the meetings of the new pagans or to read their publications. Between light and darkness, between the Catholic faith and pagan skepticism there can be no compromise, no attempt at reconciliation.

THE TWO ATTITUDES TOWARDS GOD

To know the truth of religion, and to distinguish the true pearl from the false, we must first study the idea of God. We Christians believe in the existence of God. In the first article of the Creed we say: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." We therefore, believe in a transcendent, personal God, our Creator, who with infinite wisdom has given being to the visible world, and has made man to His own image.

Paganism teaches the contrary. Man and the world are not creatures of God. Man has fashioned his own gods. The order of the Universe if it be not accidental is the outcome of laws which own no lawgiver except the world itself. Man has formed gods after his own imagination; first in wood and stone, later in more spiritual forms, sometimes even deifying the State.

We Christians believe in God's revelation. The infinitely perfect God, One in Three, has bowed to the level of the creature and has revealed Himself to him, in times long gone by through the prophets, in the fulness of time through Christ and the Apostles. Faith in the divine revelation is the basis of the Christian religion. The new paganism, however, says: "We did not wait till God gave us the light of revelation from on high. With his own hand Prometheus snatched the fire from the gods of Olympus. We do not believe that which God has revealed. We believe that which we can experience with our senses or attain to with our reason."

THE CONTENTS OF REVELATION

One of the most serious objections they raise against the Christian revelation is this: Christianity in its historical background and in its sacred books is of the Far East. It smacks of earth and of the desert. It does not suit the Western and Indo-Germanic temperament.

It is true that the word of God was made known to the patriarchs and prophets in Palestine, and later in surround-

ings where Greek culture held sway. It is true that the Holy Land was the scene of Our Lord's life from the cradle to the grave. It is true that here and there in the Scriptures certain expressions, certain parables, certain images have an Oriental color. But the contents of the revelation are inspired by God. They are the word of God, come from on high like the tongues of fire on Pentecost Day. They are not a plant which sprang up spontaneously on Jewish soil, a manifestation of the flesh and blood of Israel.

When the Divine revelation came, it had to be received by some nation, and God in His eternal designs had chosen the people of the little land of Canaan for that purpose. The peoples of the earth come and go; their boundaries change every century, if not more frequently. But Christianity, now two thousand years old, does not conform to the individual traits of one people only, or adapt itself to the character of a single nation. Like the sun in the heavens, it belongs to all times and to all peoples.

THE LAW OF GOD

We Christians believe in the Commandments of God. The Lord has given to man in the voice of conscience and in His revealed word a series of Commandments, and man, if he believes in God's sovereignty, is bound to obey them: and this from internal conviction and filial love, not from servile fear, as in the tyrannical pagan religions of the East, devoid of the light of revelation. Christianity says: "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth" (I Kings, iii, 9), "Lord what wilt thou have me to do" (Acts ix, 6).

The pagan, on the contrary, says: "I am my own master. I know of myself what I have to do, and I give myself my commandments. I have no need of any other guidance." But when the line of duty is traced at one's own will and deduced from racial instinct, it can be changed or abolished by that same will at any moment. In such a manner the whole base of order and all moral civilization would collapse.

PROVIDENCE

We Christians believe in the Providence of God. The doctrine of Divine Providence and of the Divine government of the world is an inexpressibly comforting truth. It means that the history of the world, the history of nations,

the lives of individuals are under the guidance of an all-powerful, all-good God. While men sleep, He watches. With sure hand He steers the helm, when all around the storm rages. In His sight the nations are like a drop in a bucket; the stars are as grains of sand, and yet a sparrow does not fall from the roof-top unknown to this Heavenly Father.

Paganism, on its side, admits destiny, an impersonal, heartless force, symbolized by the threads of Fate. It does not admit a loving Providence, since it denies the existence of a personal God and of a supernatural order.

INNER NATURE OF THE TWO

Paganism ever betrays its inmost nature—pride. It prefers to remain in darkness rather than accept the light of Divine Revelation. It would rather follow the wrong road than be led aright by the Commandments of God. It prefers to be crushed by a cruel destiny rather than submit to Divine Providence. With maniacal presumption it puts man in the place of God. It raises the cry of Lucifer. "I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isaias xiv, 13).

Of paganism and Christianity are verified these terrifying words of Christ: "For judgment am I come into this world: that they who see not may see, and they who see may become blind." Those who humbly desire the light and believe in God's word will get sight; those who pride themselves on their wisdom, and love more the darkness than the light, will become blind. Likewise, these other words of Our Lord are verified in the pride of paganism and the humility of Christianity: "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Matt. xxiii, 12). In a very touching way these words are true of the simple Capuchin Brother, St. Conrad, who for forty years, unknown to the outer world, served the poor at the convent gate, and today is honored by the whole Catholic world.

TWO ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHRIST

In the second and succeeding articles of the Creed we profess our faith in Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, who became man, was born of the Virgin Mary, by His

death on the Cross redeemed us from sin and eternal death. On the third day He arose again. Without Jesus Christ there is no Christianity. Without the genuine Christ there is no genuine Christianity.

In regard to Jesus, paganism finds three stumbling-blocks: Sin, Redemption, the Cross.

The first stumbling block is the idea of sin. The existence of sin is undeniable. That there is within us a double law—the law of the members and the law of the mind—is a reality which we have all experienced. In sin we feel the “sting of death,” the curse of wrong done. Peace of mind is lost; the happiness of the home is wrecked. We become a prey to remorse and deeply disgusted with life. The majority of suicides are caused by moral, not economic, misery.

The pagans say the consciousness of sin reduces men to weak, pitiable puppets, who lose all confidence in their own powers. They bury themselves in a world of sorrow, or else flee the world. It would be better, they say, to deaden the sense of sin. But Christianity does not confine itself to arousing the sense of guilt. It frees us from it. In being liberated from sin man would seem to receive a new life. He finds new pleasure in his work. He loves his family and his country with a deeper affection. Weighed down with an enormous burden, we bow to recite the *mea culpa*, but at the *Indulgenciam* the absolution obtained from God makes us raise our heads high once more and face life with a newborn courage. The thousands who this very day have received forgiveness of their sins in the Sacrament of Penance can testify from their personal experience to a new joy in life which with peace of conscience entered their souls.

REDEMPTION

The word “Redemption,” too, which for us is so divinely beautiful, is for the pagans a stumblingblock. The thousands of years which preceded the coming of Christ show that there is no such thing as self-redemption. A saving hand must be stretched out from heaven to him who has fallen into the abyss of sin, whence he cries with the Psalmist, “From the depths, O Lord, deliver me” (Psalm 129). Only one bereft of his senses could say: “I prefer to perish in the abyss, should I not succeed in escaping by my own

efforts." Nor can the nation or the people give a redeemer, since the sin which is to be blotted out is principally a sin of the race. There is but one redeemer, the Son of Man, in whose Blood we obtain redemption and remission of sin. Walk in the light of the Christian doctrine of redemption that you may have light, that you may not be overcome by the darkness of a paganism which knows no redemption but only blank despair.

THE CROSS

The third and greatest stumblingblock for the pagans in Christian doctrine is the word "Cross." They have impiously declared: "We must no longer rest until Germany is freed from the Cross of Christ" (*Nordland*, 1934, 15th point). Let us say in reparation: "Hail, Holy Cross."

St. Paul pondered deeply on this mystery of the Cross: "For although He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God towards you." For us the Cross is no scandal, no shame. For us it is the symbol of strength and victory.

NEW PAGANS ARE APOSTATES

Christianity without Christ is paganism. The ancient pagans raised altars to the unknown God. They knew nothing of Christ, of His Redemption, of His Cross. The modern pagans are more guilty. Among them there are many who once knelt before the Cross, who were baptized and confirmed in the Sign of the Cross, and who have faithlessly broken their Confirmation pledges. The modern paganism, unlike the ancient, is an apostasy. It denies the true God whom it has known. On this account its hatred of Christianity is the greater, as usually is the case with apostates. The men of Niniveh, the ancient pagans, will rise up in judgment against the men of this generation.

The new pagan shudders when he hears the words Church, Sacrament, grace, priesthood.

But you Catholic men are not afraid when you hear tell of the Church. You know that it is the order and command of God.

Today the Church is accused on every side of a desire for world power and universal domination. You should defend

your Church with the words first uttered nineteen hundred years ago: "If this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it." We are happy to be members of this Church.

You do not take alarm when you hear the word "grace" mentioned. Sanctifying grace elevates us to the Divine Sonship, and gives us a share in the life of God Himself. Actual grace illuminates the intellect, strengthens the will and arouses in us zeal for good. Every grace is a divine help for our weakness. It makes us good in the sight of God, and helps us to progress continually. Do not therefore believe the new pagans when they tell you that grace weakens the human will and lessens man's energy. On the contrary, by means of grace the human will becomes capable of ever greater efforts, even of the heroic. Human energy is stimulated to do and dare. "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall take wings as eagles" (Isaias xl, 31).

THE INTERMEDIARY OF GRACE

You do not fear when you hear the name of priest. The priest is the intermediary of grace, the dispenser of the mysteries of God. In the natural order God works through the laws of nature when He guides the stars in their course through the firmament and when He clothes the lilies of the field. So also in the supernatural order He works through His angels and saints, and through His ministers on earth, whom He has made intermediaries of grace, to cleanse souls, making them whiter than snow, and to break to them the bread of life eternal. As in the natural order the parents transmit natural life, so in the supernatural order the priests transmit the life of grace. The new pagans say: "We have no need of priests to disturb our souls in the Sacrament of Penance. We prefer to be lost rather than be saved by another." And yet they would like to make the priests the scapegoats of all that goes wrong. Such statements show that the old liberalism still lives on with its hackneyed phrases.

THE TWO IDEALS

Faith is wisdom; unbelief is folly. Faith, that is to say, believing to be true what God has taught, is the eye which

enables us to see the supernatural world. Of its nature faith is directed towards the divine and supernatural truths, but at the same time it is of immense value as regards our social life on earth. When one ceases to believe in God, faith in his fellowman gradually crumbles away. He doubts his words, his oaths, his protestations of loyalty. This is nothing short of a national calamity.

In a well-known drama the heroine says to the man who seeks her love: "How can I trust your love, if you have broken faith with God?" Another poet (Ranieri Maria Rilk) shows how once we deny God we are led on to doubt everything, even the reality of our own existence. To the question: "Is God really where you say?" corresponds the question, "Are we really here? Are we here, or is it all a dream?" Without the light of faith we travel along a dark road, a road of eternal doubts, an aimless journey without a goal. The command of the Apostle, then, which forbids religious communion between believers and heretics, is the fruit of a deep practical wisdom.

PRAYER

Faith is the wisdom of life. Prayer is an art of life. Prayer flourishes or dies with the growth or decrease of faith in God. It may be that in the frequent prayers of women-folk genuine prayer is sometimes missing. But what is more to be feared is that the faith of men dies from too little prayer. It would be nothing but paganism to live an unthinking life, with never as much as a *Pater Noster*.

It is no disgrace, even for an Indo-German, to bow the knee before the Lord, his God. From continually reading the newspapers and listening to the radio, surrounded by the never-ending rush and bustle and the turmoil of this new era, we run the risk of becoming shallow and superficial. A *Pater Noster* recited in silence will give us back gravity and recollection.

I have an admission to make to you, Catholic men. Oftentimes my head is heavy and weary from the many daily occupations, from the stream of correspondence which from morning to night brings queries of all kinds from far and near, from the anxieties of a vast diocese, from much visiting. But when at night in my private chapel I recite the Rosary

with my household, repeating decade after decade fifty times, the same *Ave Maria*, contemplating the mysteries of our Redemption, ever old, ever new, I feel my spirit refreshed after the anxiety and the toil of the day. I feel then as if the sweet hand of the Mother of God rested on my head, brushing away all weariness. Yes, prayer is an art of life which remains unknown to the unbeliever.

SENSE OF DUTY

Conscientiousness is the consecration of life to an ideal. Nowadays the word conscience is much abused. Will is not conscience. Christian conscientiousness is impossible if the conscience is not educated according to the Commandments of God. It exists only when one believes in God and considers himself bound by His precepts. The pagan, who makes for himself his moral laws, and then abolishes them at will, cannot speak as we do of conscientiousness. A nation without God becomes a nation without a conscience. It is not new gods we need, nor new commandments. What we need is a greater conscientiousness in the observance of the old commandments, which are the pillars of the moral order: love of family, conjugal fidelity, social justice, respect for truth and abhorrence of falsehood. By these laws Christianity gives to society much more than paganism can give it.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

Virtue is the spirit of the hero. In one point particularly the new paganism thinks it has a great advantage over Christianity, and that is in the education of the "hero." "We live in a revival of heroism?" says a modern prophet. Anyone who saw our German soldiers in the trenches during the Great War knows to what heights of heroism the German soul could rise even at that time. But beside the heroism of the soldier who remains faithful to a great and noble ideal at the cost of many sacrifices, even of life itself, there is also moral courage, the heroism of duty fulfilled, of a life of silent sacrifice; heroism in small things, in privations and sufferings patiently borne.

This heroism is Christian virtue. It is the cardinal virtue of fortitude. Those who suffer silently without complaint in the wards of our hospitals, are not they of the

number of our heroes? Christian humility, respect for God's majesty are true acts of courage. They are heroic virtues, and not the "virtues of dogs." In order that the Church declare a person a saint, it must be proved of him, as of St. Conrad, that during his lifetime be practised Christian virtues in a heroic degree, that is, in an extraordinary measure. In the education of the hero, then, the Church yields no point to paganism.

We wish to remain children of light. Christ has pointed out to us the splendid goal of our endeavors—to become sons of light by believing in His Word. "Walk, therefore, whilst you have light, that the darkness overtake you not!" The torches of the procession, in which we are about to take part, warn us to resist, each one for himself, as true sons of light, the new paganism, whether open or in secret. We must not seek a conciliation between the light and the darkness, a likeness between Christ and Belial, a harmony between faith and incredulity. We should rise up with our Catholicism renewed and strengthened. We should not call ourselves Christians, and in the same breath deny what we have said. We must not be Christian by conviction and pagan in our affections. "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in you be not darkness" (Luke xi, 35). "Be ye sons of the light and apostles of the light."